Benefit of Signing CTBT

4044. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a better international appreciation of India's security concern now that what it was a month ago because of Government's diplomatic initiative taken recently;

(b) whether Government are now eager to secure some concessions before addressing the issue of signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in a meaningful fashion, as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated the 6th July, 1998; and

(c) if so, what are the details of benefits that would accrue to India by signing the CTBT at this juncture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) India's stand on CTBT was based on the assessment that the Treaty did not address our security concerns. The tests conducted by India in May, 1998 have given us the basic capability for assured security. This is also the rationale for the voluntary moratorium which fulfils the basic obligation required under the Treaty. We are now prepared to move forward on discussing the CTBT. This exercise is underway in our bilateral discussions with key countries and reciprocal responses that would facilitate progress are being explored.

Remarks made by British Foreign Secretary

4045. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Hindustan Times, dated 3rd July, 1998 captioned "British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, spoils both at NRIs' meeting" co-hosted by the Institute of NRIs in UK and the Indo-British Cooperation Banquet Committee which was primarily meant to be a social event held in honour of Mr. Cook in London on 2nd July, 1998; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction to the reported remarks of British Foreign Secretary that "India did not enhance its security, economic or its standing in the modern world by opting to carry out the nuclear tests" in Pokhran?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Government of India's decisions on matters relating to our national security are based on our own assessment of our legitimate security concerns and requirements.

Negotiations between India and Nepal

4046. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any negotiations between India and Nepal to improve bilateral relations and trade have taken place following the visit of the President of India to that country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and the agreements and protocols, if any, reached as a result thereof; and

(c) the follow-up action since taken in the light thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Following the President's visit to Nepal, the 2nd meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Border Management was held in Delhi from 16-17 June, 1998. At the meeting, a number of decisions with the objective of preventing misuse of the open border between India and Nepal by undesirable elements, were taken by the two sides. The meeting was followed up by Home Secretary level talks on June 18, which, inter alia, reviewed the decisions taken by the JWG.

The First Director General level talks on Customs Cooperation were held in New Delhi from 15-16 June, 1998 to discuss mechanism to monitor and effectively combat smuggling activities across the open India-Nepal border.

No formal agreements or protocols were concluded following the above meetings. Negotiations for the renewal of the Transit Treaty, the validity of which expires in December, 1998, are expected to commence in the course of the coming months. The working of the additional road transit route to Bangladesh via Phulbari has been further streamlined and is now available for all seven days of the week.

Statement regarding Sanctity of LOC in Kashmir

4047. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Pioneer of June 20, 1998, reporting that Clinton Administration of the US had stressed the need to internationalise the Kashmir issue adding that the problem could no longer be ignored by the World Community;

(b) whether Government's attention has also been drawn to the statement of Mr. Strobe Talbot, a US Government representative, underlining the sanctity of LOC in Kashimir as reported in the Observer of June 20, 1998; and

(c) what is Government's reaction and response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Pipneer of June 20, 1998.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of India. Government has reiterated that there is no place for international involvement whatsoever in matters concerning Jammu & Kashmir.

India's Representation against Imposition of Curbs

4048. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the steps taken to represent to the International Court of Justice and the World Trade Organisation against the curbs imposed by World Bank and International Monetary Fund under the diktats of Individul Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): As all the international bodies/organisations under reference have been set up through international consensus and agreements, they have been vested with specific jurisdiction which is independent of each other. A member country having differences, either with the authorities of the concerned international organisation, or with other member states, will be obliged to pursue it in accordance with the prescribed procedures within the organisation. Thus, the dispute settlement mechanisum stipulated within the World Trade Organisation (WTO), when approached by member states, essentially entertains disputes based on provisions of the various WTO agreements. Similarly, the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice is specifically limited to disputes between member countries and does not extend to disputes between a member country and some other international institution or organisation.

In any case, India is not taking any loans from the International Monetary Fund. As regards the World Bank, out of the five projects deferred on May 26 and June 2, 1998, two were approved on July 1, 1998 while the others are under examination by the World Bank.

Flouting of Financial Rules by Diplomats

4049. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item which appeared in Pioneer, dated 3rd July, 1998 regarding flouting of financial rules by diplomats pointed out by the CAG;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) what action Government propose to initiate in regard to the two specific cases cited in the news-item; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?